

Fen Ditton Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers
summarised by

Mike Petty

Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News. They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library together with have detailed cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check. There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1897 03 06 c

Messrs Grain, Moyes and Wisbey offered for sale by auction two valuable licensed properties situate at Fulbourn and Fen Ditton respectively. There was a large and representative attendance and the bidding was very brisk. The property at Fulbourn consists of the beer-house known as "The Royal Oak" with 4-quarter brewery, malting, club-room etc, a farm homestead with barn and stables, and about two acres of paddock and orchard in the occupation of Messrs Hudson's Cambridge & Pampisford Breweries Company at a year rent of £55. The bidding started at £500 and ultimately reached £1,050 at which price it was disposed of. "The Blue Lion", Fen Ditton was then offered. It contains tap-room, sitting-room and three bedrooms, with a yard at side etc and is let at a rental of £25 per annum. The first bid given was £300, and the price quickly rose until it reached £825, when it was sold. The results of the sales were highly satisfactory to the vendors.

1897 11 06

Carter Jonas offered for sale by auction the important freehold property of the Fen Ditton Hall Estate, comprising the fine old manor house known as "Ditton Hall", Ditton Meadows on the Long Reach, the Home Farm at Fen Ditton and 402 acres of land. Three lots on the east side of Ditton Lane, each containing 1 acre of land were sold for £325 and three acres fronting Newmarket Road realised £220. The Fen Ditton Hall, with 72 acres of grass land known as Ditton Meadows found several bidders but the property was bought in at £4,000 and several small plots of grass land adjoining were withdrawn

1900 11 26

On Saturday the Inns of Court Mounted Infantry joined the Cambridge University Rifles in a field day on the Newmarket Road. The tactical scheme presumed that a convoy from Newmarket was desirous of entering Cambridge along the main road through Quy and south of Fen Ditton. The CURV were told to attack, capture, hamper or destroy this convoy. Most interesting operations followed with cyclists, horsemen and infantry all fully employed. As dusk set in the convoy seized its opportunity and slipped past. The public schools and town and local corps were unable to attend at the last moment as their rifles had been called in for Government inspection.

1900 11 28

An Inspector of the Local Government Board held an inquiry at Cambridge Guildhall with reference to the application of the Town Council to borrow £15,500 for the provision of a new cemetery at a spot near Fen Ditton. Dr Cooper said there was a good deal of talk and it was of the utmost importance to the inhabitants that the formation of the new cemetery would not in the slightest degree be of risk to the purity of the water supply of the town.

1901 18 17 c

We understand that the Poplar Hall Estate, Fen Ditton, has just been purchased by a London financier and that a syndicate has been formed to float a public company to undertake the manufacture of Portland cement upon an extensive scale. Exhaustive experiments have been made and an eminent local authority has certified that, without a single exception, they are of the most satisfactory character.

1901 08 29

Cambridgeshire enjoys the reputation of being an agricultural and fruit-growing county but now must be added the reputation of manufacturing centre. There are several factories within a few miles of Cambridge and another on a large scale no further away than Fen Ditton is promised. The Poplar Hall Estate has been purchased where the beds of limestone and clay marl contain every natural ingredient for the manufacture of the highest class Portland Cement. In addition blue gault or brick earth underlies the estate and this should make the best white bricks. It has a frontage of nearly half a mile to the Cam on which is already erected a wharf or loading dock which would put the works in direct touch with the steamboat companies running into Lynn docks

1905 06 12

The sinister hand of Death has cast its shadow over Cambridge in its most joyous mood. In the very midst of the May Week holiday three people were drowned through the capsizing of the ferryboat known as the Red Grind at Fen Ditton. Two journeys had been made after the racing, the ferry crowded each time and when the boat was ready for the third about 20 people commenced the fateful voyage. Two University men jumped on at the last moment, the ferry gave a lurch and turned turtle pitching the screaming occupants into six feet of water. 05 06 12

1905 06 12

Words cannot describe the scene at Fen Ditton when the ferry sank. People in the grounds of the Plough rushed to the bank, one or two men plunged into the water, others seized chairs and hurled them towards the struggling mass in the river. Pleasure boats hurried and scurried in answer to frantic appeals for help and the Ditton men shoved off in their black fishing boats. Off the twenty or so who went down with the ferry all but three were saved. 05 06 12a-c

1905 06 12

Miss Minnie Murkin is the central figure of the Fen Ditton ferry sinking. Today she was to have been a happy bride but now her body will be borne to the tomb. At her home in Selwyn Terrace the last few days have witnessed all the preliminary events that precede the wedding; presents have been arriving and her finance came from Swansea. He was on the bank, witnessed the upsetting of the boat and endured the agony of seeing his prospective bride dragged beneath the surface by the sinking craft. 05 06 12a-c

1905 06 13

The inquests on the three victims of the ferry sinking was opened in Fen Ditton schoolroom. The jury proceeded to the melancholy task of viewing the bodies. Those of Mrs Annie Thompson and Miss Minnie Murkin were laid side by side in a darkened room at the Plough, attired in white as for burial, and awaiting outside were the coffins. They then proceeded to a house in which Miss Handscombe was already laid in her coffin. Next they viewed the boat which had been raised from the river. 05 06 13a

1905 06 15

Almost before Cambridge has had time to recover from the shock of the Fen Ditton ferry tragedy another sad fatality has occurred. A conductor employed by the Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company was on the front of the vehicle talking to the driver when another bus passed. He leant out to shout something to it, hanging on to the handrail when his head struck a lamppost. He was thrown underneath the 'bus and one of the hind wheels crashed over his head, which was battered out of recognition. 05 06 15a

1905 07 17

Licensing magistrates were told that the old ferry at the Plough, Fen Ditton, scene of the tragic sinking, would not be used again and a new boat would be obtained. The old tenant had no knowledge of boats but the new one was a lighterman by trade and understood the workings of a ferry. The old ferry was a 'death trap' and the new one must be a safe one and competent to carry passengers. 05 07 17a

1905 12 12

Mr Thomas Day, whose sweetheart, Miss Violet Handscombe, was one of the victims of the Fen Ditton Red Grind ferry disaster, has died in Addenbrooke's Hospital aged 25. He was with her on the ferry when it upset and they became separated. He reached the bank, then plunged back into the river and found her, but she later died. The shock had a detrimental

effect on his physical condition and when he was attacked with illness quickly succumbed. He died of bronchial pneumonia and rupture of the lungs. 05 12 12

1906 02 13

The Plough public house at Fen Ditton comprised three public rooms, a long room, stabling for 10 horses and three bedrooms. Weekly trade was about one barrel, three-dozen bottles of beer and about half-a-gallon of spirits. A new ferryboat had been built, following the recent sinking tragedy, but it would not be used until it had been inspected. Police objected to the renewal of the licence as there were four full-licenced houses and three 'on' beer houses for a village of 680 people including the Harvest Home beerhouse and the Long Reach on the opposite side of the river. 06 02 13a

1907 02 12

Licencing sessions – Bottisham, Pike & Eel Fen Ditton, Swaffham Prior – Anchor & Red Lion, Guilden Morden – Six Bells – 07 02 12a & b

1907 06 29

The Milkmaid was one of 13 licenced houses in Willingham and they could do away with half of them, magistrates were told. But there were 100 acres of market gardens all round where a great many men and girls were constantly employed and some came to the house for lunch. The trade had increased since the King William was closed and now did over a barrel a week. Also: Marquis of Granby, Woodman's Arms, Claremont, Golden Fleece; Swaffham Prior Anchor, Harston Green Man, Lt Shelford Three Horseshoes, Over Duke of Cumberland, Willingham Milkmaid - details, Isleham Bell, Fen Ditton Pike & Eel. Bassingbourn Tally Ho, 07 06 29 & a

1907 09 23

Fen Ditton parish council's efforts to acquire the land occupied as allotments have proved futile. They had valued the land at £30 per acre and been prepared to bid up to £34, which would enable the allotments to be let at £2 per acre. But they were outbid by Mr T. Musgrave Francis who bought it for £1,370. 07 09 23

1908 02 15

Swaffham Prior had nine licenced houses, six full and three beer 'on' for a population of 950. The John Bull was in a dilapidated condition, it was next door to the Red Lion which had stables for four horses and had been pub into a thorough state of repair. Bottisham have seven pubs; the Rose and Crown was in bad repair but the Swan had six bedrooms and a bakehouse. Cow and Hare, Rock Hotel, Fen Ditton: Blue Lion, Fulbourn: Royal Oak, Bottisham: Rose and Crown, Swaffham Prior: John Bull, Reach: Uncle Tom's Cabin, Lt Wilbraham: Hole in the Wall 08 02 15 & a & b

1909 03 12

Thomas Adkins of Musgrave Farm, Fen Ditton carried on a butcher's business in Norwich Street for 30 years. He was well-known at the Cattle Market and was one of the judges at the Christmas Fat Stock sales. His death at the age of 61 came as a surprise, as he usually enjoyed excellent health. About a month ago, however, he broke a blood vessel and in spite of constant and skilful medical attention he died. 09 03 12

1909 09 10

A gramophone meeting was held at Fen Ditton in support of the Government's budget. Some delay was caused by the gramophone having gone wrong but Mr S. Mallyon lent his machine. First a musical selection was rendered and then recordings of speeches by the Prime Minister (H.H. Asquith), Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lloyd George) and President of the Board of Trade (Mr Winston Churchill) were heard. There was a good attendance of men and youth but the room was not full. CWN 09 09 10

1909 11 05

Some 18 years ago there was an outbreak of typhoid in Fen Ditton and most of the private wells were condemned. Two new wells were sunk at Green End and on the site of the old village Pound. For a while all went well but then the water grew dirty and began to fail until villagers had to eke out supplies by courtesy of those with private wells. They must sink another well or arrange a supply of piped water, a meeting was told. CWN 09 11 05

1910 02 04

An old Cambridgeshire custom says that an inhabitant who transgresses the conventions shall be accorded a 'tin-kettling'. One took place at Fen Ditton where 200 people assembled outside the house of a couple, many provided with tin-kettles, tin-pans and whistles. What noise could not be made by thumping these with pieces of wood was contributed by the yelling of many voices. Popular songs were also bawled out and a special chorus composed for the occasion was sung to the accompaniment of much booing. This continued for an hour. Then effigies of the offending parties were carried high above the heads of the jeering crowd and set on fire in the middle of the roadway while the crowd danced round, jeering and shouting the names of the couple. 10 02 04h

1910 02 11

Justices were told of problems at a riverside public house in Fen Ditton which had not been conducted satisfactorily. There were weekly gatherings of non-resident young people for dancing, the questionable behaviour of some rendering a continuation of it undesirable. Men have left the house in a drunken condition and it has been visited many times by young men, presumably undergraduates, in cabs, accompanied by females of doubtful reputation. The tenant has been warned previously, today they were given a second warning. Probably there would not be a third warning and some action would be taken. The Justices renewed the licence this time CWN 10 02 11

1910 02 18

Dr R. Vaughan Williams lectured on 'The Folk Songs of East Anglia' and the enjoyment was enhanced by Mr J. Steuart Wilson of King's College who gave expressive renderings of a number of Old English ballads. Vaughan Williams had discovered the early folk ballad 'Geordie' at Fen Ditton but whether there was a great deal more to be found he did not know. At Fowlmere the Rev Campbell Yorke had got the 'May Day Song' from an old gentleman who rejoiced in the name of 'Hoppy' who preferred to do odd jobs and sleep in sheds and outhouses. He often started the first verse of a song with an entirely different tune and only got into the right swing at the end. 10 02 18 & a

1910 04 15

The heroine of the recent male impersonation escapade at Fen Ditton sat quietly in the stuffy little court room packed with pressmen and spectators. No one would imagine from her appearance that she was the sort of girl to wander about churchyards in the brother's clothes in the middle of the night or smash church windows. In her white blouse and her wealth of black hair tied back with a bow she presented a far different appearance from the dishevelled but picturesque boy seen at the police office the morning after her adventure. CWN 10 02 25 c & d

1910 04 15

Fen Ditton baby's death – 10 04 15b

1910 08 29

Fen Ditton neighbours quarrel – 10 07 29

1910 09 02

Fen Ditton overseers of poor appeal against auditor's criticism – 10 09 02b

1910 10 07

The scheme for extending the Borough boundaries so as to include Chesterton, Cherry Hinton and the urban portions of Grantchester, Trumpington and Fen Ditton was formally launched. The boundary with Chesterton is an imaginary line running down the centre of the river which presents legal difficulties over dredging. The river is used by member of the University for rowing but most of the boathouses are on the Chesterton side. The Corporation own a cemetery the parish of Fen Ditton. They have constructed a sewer and laid water mains along Newmarket Road and the land will no doubt be used for building. 10 10 07e & i & j

1911 03 24

Serious accidents Vinery Row sewage trench, Fen Ditton tumbril cart, motor bus and GER van Hills Road, Soham tree-cutter – 11 03 24

1911 10 27

The 1904 Licensing Act gave justices power to close pubs with compensation on grounds of redundancy. Then Cambridgeshire had 675 'on' licences, Cambridge 241; in six years 115 houses had closed, of which 35 were in Cambridge. The 1908 bill had suggested formula for the number of licenses. Under it Cambridge would have had entitlement of 82, a loss of 124 pubs. In Fen Ditton three of the existing pubs would have been closed and customers concentrated into the remaining two. But there was no evidence that a reduction in the number of pubs meant less drunkenness. Some people thought it was a crime for a working man visit to a pub to get a glass of beer but the drink is not the chief attraction: it is the social intercourse. 11 10 27a-c

1911 12 29

Two Fen Ditton labourers were charged with stealing a lead pump. John Thornton of Quay Water Farm said it had been taken from his yard. He went to a marine store dealer's on East Road and there saw the pump cut up in lengths. The dealer said he'd bought it from a man who said it was of no more use. The accused admitted the theft but claimed they'd been drunk at the time and dare not take it back. They recompensed the farmer for its loss. 11 12 29a

1912 01 19

Everyone should be able to live in safety in their own homes without fear of being murdered or having their property stolen, Prof Ridgeway told a packed meeting at Fen Ditton. The object of the National Service League was to make sure of the defensive powers of this country, so that if any force should land the forces of this nation should be able to repel them and destroy them, and keep the homes of the people in safety. The audience expressed their approval. 12 01 19e

1912 05 03

Two Cambridge 13-year-old boys were summonsed after P.C. Moss saw them with pistols in Fen Ditton Lane. The boys, who were in Scouts' uniform, said they'd gone there to try them and did not know they were doing wrong. The guns contained loaded cartridges which they'd bought at a shop in Sussex Street. The magistrates said he would write to the Scoutmaster. The Scouts' movement was a good one and it was bad for the corps that they should do this in uniform. The pistols were forfeited. 12 05 03b

1912 07 12

The landlord of the Dog and Pheasant Inn, Old Chesterton told police that four bagatelle balls had been stolen from the taproom of the pub. Inquiries showed that a Fen Ditton man who'd been drinking there had offered some balls for sale next morning. He claimed to have bought them three weeks earlier from a man named 'Capp' against the Corn Exchange, saying he'd

paid tenpence and a pint for them. A dealer in Regent Street said he'd bought them for eight shillings and sixpence – though the accused said he'd only got one-and-six. The landlady identified them as the ones stolen. 12 05 31f

Fen Ditton milkman fined – 12 07 12

1912 09 20

Manoeuvres – Dash on Grantchester, aircraft crashes, Trumpington Street fighting, Newmarket operations – 12 09 13i & j & l training near Fen Ditton, Airship camp, John French visit, cavalry at Royston – 12 09 13h; photos arrival Liverpool Territorials at station, camp at Linton – 12 09 13m; air scouts, Col Cody biplane photo – 12 09 20

1913 01 10

Fen Ditton Band of Hope rally

1913 03 07

Mrs Pankhurst, leader of the militant suffragists addressed a meeting at the Blue Boar Hotel. A gramophone in the window of an undergraduate's room was playing the Dead March as she entered the hotel but there was no demonstration. A vigorous anti-suffrage campaign has also been conducted with meetings at Newnham Croft and Fen Ditton disagreeing with votes for women. If women ever sat in Parliament they would insist on a debate on the flannelette question before consideration of foreign policy. 13 03 07 p4

1913 03 24

Parish council elections, Burwell, Fen Ditton, Grantchester charities

1913 05 02

Fen Ditton landlord of Globe Inn charged selling liquor on Sunday

1913 05 09

Election meetings, Linton, Castle Camps, Shudy Camps, Soham, Fordham, Newmarket, Fen Ditton etc

1913 05 16

Close of campaign, East Cambs bye-election – rotten eggs at Waterside Ely, uproar at Fen Ditton

1913 07 11

Fen Ditton sewage Inquiry

1913 07 18

Fen Ditton property sales

1913 07 25

Undergraduate fined for furious riding at Fen Ditton, attempted bribe

1913 11 28 p10

Fen Ditton Boy Scouts troop flag consecrated

1914 02 06

Church Hall.—Fen Ditton Church Hall was opened on Wednesday afternoon by Archdeacon Cunningham. For many years a parish room has been a requirement of the village, but the Vicar and his committee did not feel justified in going to the expense of considerably over £300 without having a prospect of being able to pay for the work. Collections have been made from time to time on behalf of the Hall Fund, however, and as a result of generous donation and social events the money was raised with the exception of about £20. This sum is chiefly

on account of the heating apparatus and was placed in the original scheme after the work had been commenced by Mr. F. Mills, the architect and builder. The hall has been erected on a piece of land which was formerly part of the Vicarage garden and is constructed in white brick with red tiled roof. The large hall will accommodate about 300 people.

1914 02 06

Licenses considered for Fen Ditton Globe Inn, Somersham Rising Sun & Crown & Punchbowl, Isleham Queens Head closed 14 02 06k

1914 04 03

Fen Ditton has a number of charities. One is a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground where a parishioner can get one shilling and threepence by coming and asking for it. This is open to abuse by people earning good money who 'had the cheek' to apply for the dole. But this method of distribution has proved the most satisfactory of any yet hit upon. Last year 107 had applied including some who earned 50 shillings a week. 14 04 03

1914 08 28

Rev T. Scott, Fen Ditton, death

1914 11 20

Fen Ditton Belgian concert

1914 12 04

The Cambridge Corps of Guides is composed of men with an intimate knowledge of their locality, its roads, bridges, blacksmith and wheelwright's shops, camping grounds and billeting accommodation. They will not bear arms or wear uniforms but have been supplied with button-hole badges. In event of invasion they will act as a guide to troops. They include F.W. Crain of Fen Ditton, Frank Muncey from Fordham and George Watson from Babraham

1915 08 06

Photos of fallen soldiers. A.E. Seagrott; E.H. Cawthrop; W.F. Taylor, Lt Shelford; W.Gee, Sawston; A. Davis, T. Kimmence; C.L. Wayman; E. Clarke, Bourn; H.C. Yorke, J.H. Caldecoat, Bourn; F.J. Gipp, Chesterton; N.W. Fielding; O.J. Goddard, Dewey; G. Pamplin, Fen Ditton; J. Wallage; Phillips; C. Richmond, Fulbourn; W.E. Jones; J.J. Mayle; L.J. Naylor; S. Phillips; R.L. Player; C. Butler – 15 08 06b

1920 09 29

Fen Ditton war memorial unveiled

1920 10 27

Cambridge Town Planning inquiry considers objections of cement manufacturers about land Cherryhinton Road; proposes new road from Cherry Hinton Road to Fen Ditton Road across Coldham's Common; had been excavation for coprolites and foundations were bad, brick pits. Was good supply for Cement works but this meant noise, dust and smoke – 20 03 03a Fen Ditton 'heathen obelisk' war memorial deadlock – 20 10 27

1920 10 23

Fen Ditton war memorial proposed site rejected by RDC

1921 05 04

Fen Ditton war memorial unveiled – 21 05 04a

1921 05 11

Fen Ditton war memorial unveiling – 21 05 11a

1922 07 28

The principal new roads proposed as part of the Cambridge town planning scheme include a main road starting from Red Cross, on Hills Road, going approximately north to Newmarket Road at the corner of Fen Ditton-lane, divided into sections. Number 3 runs in a straight line as far as the old Newmarket railway line and then slightly curves into Mill-Road. There are two branches which both lead towards the station. It will be necessary to form a subway under the railway or bridge the line, unless this line, which at present is only used for storage of railway carriages, is done away with altogether

1922 11 06

Fen Ditton Parish Council asked the County Council to take steps for the acquisition for the purposes of a recreation ground of the field opposite the Plough Inn. Ald Tebbutt remarked that he did not think it was desirable to encourage football among young people, but he thought it was most desirable to encourage bowls among old men. (Laughter). Recreation grounds should not be only for cricket and football, but for the whole village, including women. Nov 6

1928 06 21

Fen Ditton school has been inspected but no attempt should be made to improve the existing buildings. Improvements would cost £1,800 but owing to the cramped nature of the site it would be a waste of money to try and patch up the old school and far better to spend a bit more and have a new one. It was possible that the population would increase and if a suitable site was available Horningsea school could be grouped with it, with a consequent saving in salaries.

1928 06 27 c

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1930 02 26

A woman was summoned for allowing a barn at Fen Ditton to be used for immoral purposes. She had converted it into a dance hall, teas were advertised and dances held. Det-Sergt Willis said he looked through the window and observed people inside. Some of the women attending were known to be of an undesirable character and the men mostly members of the University. The girls were dancing by themselves down the centre of the room holding up their dresses; another girl got on top of the piano and danced. Couples frequently left and went to a nearby cottage. Later the University Proctor arrived; he went to the dance room which was in darkness and by the light of his lamp could see four undergraduates and seven girls. They said they were telling ghost stories. 30 02 26a-d

1930 03 10

Pungent remarks on the conduct of the Fen Ditton dance hall were made by the chairman of the Bottisham bench in dismissing the case. It had attracted a great deal of public attention but they had come very reluctantly to the conclusion that the law did not admit their convicting. "If we are out to administer the moral law then no condemnation would be sufficiently strong for the shameless and wanton proceedings that have been allowed to occur; had we been in a position to impose a fine it would have been a very heavy one", he said. "I am ashamed that a young constable should have been called upon in the course of his duty to witness the scenes described and the only service the defendant can do us is to leave the neighbourhood" 30 03 10b-c

1930 06 21

Six Cambridge bus drivers involved in the 'battle' of Sidney Street on the first day of the May races appeared in court charged with obstruction. Only Ortona buses were allowed to stop there but a long line of coaches had filled the whole side of the road. The drivers said the monopoly was unfair. They also complained that Ortona had increased the price of a ticket to Fen Ditton from twopence halfpenny to sixpence a trip. 30 06 21aa & b

1930 12 01

The sensational Fen Ditton case when a woman was accused of keeping a disorderly house will be sent back to be heard by magistrates. Police had kept watch on a room called the dance hall where it was alleged acts of immorality took place; some women were held upside down and couples found in very suggestive attitudes. The men were Cambridge undergraduates and the girls of the working-class type but there was no evidence of prostitution. 30 12 01d

1931 01 02

The lady owner of a barn at Fen Ditton told the court it had been used as a practice room for a band and they suggested she should run tea dances; a large number of prominent people attended. They had the lights out on one occasion because Conan Doyle was there and as he was very keen on spiritualism they had a small séance. But police said she had deliberately inveigled young men of the University and girls into immoral courses, using the premises as a brothel. She was fined £100. 31 01 02i-l

1932 04 06

Fen Ditton school was on the 'Black List'. It was the worst in the county and probably the worst in England. The number of children had increased and now there were 103 packed like sardines in the main room with three teachers engaged with three different classes with only a flimsy curtain between them. The sanitary arrangements were very bad and the school was falling to bits. There was no playground so the children had to play on the road. They could do nothing with the site and would have to build a new school. 32 04 06b

1932 08 26

A stack fire which broke out near Coldham's Lane attracted a crowd several hundred strong. It is believed to have been started by one of the many courting couples who frequent the place. Mr A.H. Doggett of Rectory Farm, Cherry Hinton said: "The fire was not caused by internal combustion, nor by lightning. Couples come here and lie about. I don't mind so much as long as they don't damage my property". Boy scouts from Fen Ditton worked with police and farm hands to prevent the flames spreading. 32 08 26e

1932 11 04

Fen Ditton & its school – reminiscences – 32 11 04e

1933 01 24

Fen Ditton school schemes – 33 01 24b

1933 01 30

Fen Ditton school site agreed – 33 01 30d

1933 04 19

Cambridgeshire police are losing a valued officer by the retirement of P.S. Sidney Smith. He joined the force in 1907 and was stationed at Eltisley, Swavesey, Willingham and Fen Ditton before being promoted to sergeant in 1926 and moving to Melbourn. He will be missed by motorists, for he has had more motor cases than anyone else in the county. 33 04 19

1933 09 20

The pilot of a Gypsy Moth was summonsed for low flying at Fen Ditton. He had hired the plane at Marshall's aerodrome but then began 'hedge hopping', looping-the-loop and narrowly missing telegraph poles. Roy Fisher, the ground engineer at Marshall's waved a piece of white fabric to try and attract the pilot's attention and then Mr Marshall went up in a Puss Moth in an attempt to bring him down. They flew together but the man did not land with him. He told magistrates he had served in the RAF but was fined £5 33 09 20

1934 03 03

Marshall's Flying School had offered to buy Elfleda Farm, Fen Ditton for a public aerodrome, county councillors were told. Financially it would be a very good deal, giving them a profit of £3,000 for land they'd earmarked for smallholdings. But it was a very growing neighbourhood and the aerodrome would be a source of great annoyance to residents who didn't want these noisy things coming at all hours of the day and night. Mr Marshall would be getting a thunderingly good deal, others argued. The sale was agreed 34 03 03

1935 01 29

An Eastern Counties omnibus had a narrow escape from crashing over Fen Ditton bridge onto the line below. The bus was travelling up the hill towards Fen Ditton when it came into collision with a private motor car, swung round and ended with the front part over the embankment. Neither the driver of the bus, Mr J. Pitchers, or the driver of the car were hurt 35 01 29

1936 10 01

A pilot summonsed for flying at a low altitude over the Cam at Fen Ditton told the court he was carrying a photographer for the Sport and General Press Agency. Herbert Cook was taking pictures of the Bumping Races from a side window using an ordinary camera with a long focus lens. They had to fly across the river and would not have got good photographs if they'd come down to the tree tops. There were a number of other planes from Marshall's flying about. Spectators complained he was too low and had caused one of the waitresses at The Plough to spill the things on a tray in the tea garden. The case was dismissed. 36 10 01 & a

1937 06 24

Fatal air crash at Fen Ditton kills Horningsea man – 37 06 24 & a

1938 02 17

A Fen Ditton shopkeeper told the court that after a four-hour meeting with a representative of National Automatic Machines Ltd he'd agreed to have a cigarette machine on a week's trial. He was told he could then buy it for £22, paying in monthly instalments. So he'd signed a piece of paper, much of which had been folded over, and the machine had been fixed to the wall. But he'd only been married a few weeks, and found he could not afford it. However the firm said he'd agreed to have it and demanded payment. Their claim was dismissed. 38 02 17

1938 07 16

Fen Ditton ferry boat sinking 1883 – personal memories – 38 07 16b

1940 02 12

Fen Ditton Ancient Shepherds completely burnt out the well-furnished lounge 40 02 12b

1940 06 15

Land in Trust. — Mr. Henry Clement Francis, of Burleigh House, Newmarket Road, Cambridge, who died on February 13 last, aged 83 years left gross estate of the value of £33,512 13s. 2d., with net personality £30,614 17s. 11d. Testator left Freehold land in the parish of Fen Ditton, now used by the Abbey United Football Club, to the Vicar of Fen Ditton

and the Mayor of Cambridge, in trust to be used for football and for grazing and dancing, and if no longer required for those purposes, to sell the ground, and one half of the proceeds to be given to the Cambridge and District Nurses and one half to the Abbey Church.

1941 09 13

Briscoe Snelson has pictures accepted for Royal Photographic Society's annual show; all of fenland scenery – rainbow over Reach lode, Reach, river farm at Fen Ditton – 41 09 13

1942 03 31

Wedding couples, Cambridge & Fen Ditton – 42 03 31

1942 07 29

Oarsmen's service, Fen Ditton – photo – 42 07 29

1944 05 05

Ill-treated cat. Three Fen Ditton youths who threw sticks and stones at a cat and then set their dogs, on it, were fined £2 each at Bottisham Court on Wednesday. 44 05 05

1948 03 24

Abbey East Social club was formally opened at the Old School, Fen Ditton. In October 1942 it was decided at the Wardens' Post, Newmarket Road, to form a committee to make plans for a club to meet the social needs of the area. In the war people realised they were enjoying something they had not had before - good fellowship, companionship and getting to know the people who lived next door. Permission had been given to use an old A.R.P. post near the borough cemetery and functions had been arranged from there. The Deputy Mayor said "I do hope it will be a very successful centre for those on the east side of the bridge. It was a very sore point that you were so isolated and there was this large estate, which has grown without any means of getting into the town"

1950 10 26

A farmer, who said he was forced to employ Czechs, Germans, Poles, Irishmen and gypsies, because he could not house English workers, applied for possession of one of his farm cottages at Fen Ditton. The occupant had previously been employed as a farm worker and tractor driver but had quit his employment to go to Marshall's. The cottage was needed for another farm worker. Of his 14 service cottages this was the only one not occupied by an employee.

1952 06 20

Cambridge Preservation Society object to the chalets and caravans at Grassy Corner, Fen Ditton. They say haphazard development of individually respectable shacks has seriously spoiled this length of river. The fifteen owners said they paid £14 a year rent for their plots and the land flooded in winter. The gypsy encampment and rubbish dump on the opposite side of the river made it difficult to understand the objections. Their gardens were well looked after and of similar layout to the "Plough" next door. If the chalets erected before the Town and Country Planning Acts are left and the later ones removed the place will look like a mouth from which half the teeth have been knocked out

1953 08 12

Sir – I paid a visit recently to the new Egerton Estate, Cambridge & had occasion to visit Fen Ditton along a footpath known as Ditton Walk, but which ought to be named Ditton Cycling Track. I thought how dangerous it was for pedestrians, as one had to be continually getting off the path into the grass to avoid being knocked down. Such a practice would not be allowed here – A. Newman, Sheffield

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1952 08 27

Only one of the 14 chalet holders on the banks of the Cam near grassy Corner, Fen Ditton, was successful in his appeal against removal. He was Mr A.G. Cooper of No.1 Plot whose chalet has been on the site for 40 years. The County Council wanted to remove it as being out of keeping with the beauty of this stretch of the river and no planning permission had been given. For many years before 1928 the fields had been used by the public to watch the May Races and were regarded as open space. It was of little agricultural value and subject to flood.

1954 06 24

Work at the King's Head, Fen Ditton, has exposed an ingle nook fireplace. The inn is some 700 years old and the landlord, Mr Fraser, intends to restore it to its original state by removing two tons of rubble. It was probably covered in over 100 years ago. The main support is a blackened-by-smoke huge oak beam and high up in the chimney can be seen the hooks from which hams were suspended.

1955 02 26

More than 100 local oarsmen gathered at the Lion Hotel to pay tribute to two Cambridgeshire Rowing Association officials, Mr Briscoe Snelson and Mr Red Alsop. They both came on the rowing scene about 1910 when there were nine clubs and 18 crews in the bumping races. At that time the Rob Roy Club had been head of the river for 14 out of the previous 15 years. From 1914 the Association was dormant for five years. It was in 1930 that the Oarmen's Service was originated; Snelson said: "I went along to see Canon Church, Rector of Fen Ditton and fixed it up. I told him we wanted to come in blazers and he replied: 'That's all right, my dear boy, come in pyjamas if you like!'" 55 02 26

1956 10 19

The Blue Lion at Fen Ditton is the first public house to be built in the area since the war and set back just across the road from the old pub of the same name. It presents a bright, colourful and very pleasant appearance. Furniture in the saloon bar comes from Denmark, there is a mural painting of oast houses by a London artist, T. Gibbs, and carvings by Miss Madge Whiteman, an actress. The car park has two stone heraldic lions obtained from a gateway in Buckinghamshire. 56 10 19 & a

1957 04 20

Fen Ditton church people have an attractive new publication. 'Life' is a handy-sized magazine full of parish news which is distributed to 2,000 houses in the area. Since the war the population had grown to about 8,000 and they cannot hope to have personal contact with the majority of parishioners. This is a way of communicating the Christian faith 57 04 20a

1957 09 11

A caravan parked at the Plough Inn, Grassy Corner, Fen Ditton was the subject of a planning appeal. The owner said it was almost concealed from the river. But it was within a green belt in an area known nationally and internationally for its special landscape value. There had been chalets on the site, but they had been removed. 57 09 11

1957 12 23

Blue Lion, Fen Ditton opening adv – 57 12 23

1958 12 03

Fen Ditton is a village that should remain static in population, councillors say. Sufficient provision has been made for necessary housing development and it would be wrong to allow the erection of nine houses at Horningsea Road. Valuable agricultural land would be lost and it would cause a traffic problem. But there was already a police house there and alternative sites would not be available, the developer claimed. 58 12 03

1960 03 18

Pub inn signs have been making a comeback. The Blue Lion at Fen Ditton has a three-dimensional figure of the heraldic beast, The Angel in Market Street have put up a very pleasant sign while the new Snocat on the Arbury estate commemorates Sir Vivian Fuch's journey to the South Pole. One of the nicest of the old signs is the big glowing Golden Rose which grows out of the wall over the door of the little public house in Emmanuel Street 60 03 18b

1960 08 20

Two Cambridgeshire rivers are so heavily polluted that the County Medical Officer has posted notices warning of the dangers to bathers. The River Lark at Isleham receives the outfall of the Bury St Edmunds sewage disposal works at Lackford. But samples taken at Waterbeach, Fen Ditton and Grantchester show the pollution in the Cam is even worse 60 08 20

1961 01 13

Throughout the year the CIP carried a series of feature articles relating to Cambridgeshire villages. They included Fen Ditton – 61 01 13 CIP

1961 03 06

Dozens of people were thrown into the fast flowing River Cam on Saturday afternoon when the ferry at Fen Ditton suddenly sank. Undergraduates who were watching the Lent Bumps plunged into the water to help the men, women and children who were striking out for the bank. Several were taken into nearby public houses where medical students assisted them and two people went to Addenbrooke's Hospital suffering from shock 61 03 06 Inquiry – 61 03 10d

1961 04 06

Steps are being taken to prevent another accident on the river ferry at The Plough public house, Fen Ditton. Police will ensure that no more than 20 people board the boat at once and Whitbread's brewery will erect removable crush barriers during race weeks to control crowds. The accident happened when one man tried to jump on the ferry as another jumped off. The balance of the boat was upset and it began rocking in the water. At the time the police had been called away to sort out a serious traffic tangle in the village. 61 04 06

1961 05 29

A leading RAF glider expert, Ernest Walter Clarke of Duxford, was killed when his sail plane broke up in the air over Fen Ditton – 61 05 29

1961 06 07

The ferry across the River Cam at Fen Ditton has been removed for the rest of the current boating season by its owners, Whitbread's Brewery, in the interest of public safety. A few weeks ago, at the end of the University Lent bumping races, the chain operated ferry sank throwing more than 30 people into the water. Known to University students as the 'Red

Grind' because of its bright colouring it has been part of the Cambridge river scene for many years 61 06 07

1961 10 05

The River Cam Conservators will approach Whitbread's to try and bring back the ferry that connected the grounds of 'The Plough' at Fen Ditton with the opposite river bank. After the ferry overturned last March, throwing many people into the water, the brewery considered erecting safety barriers on the bank but then decided to remove the boat altogether. It was later taken to Ely 61 10 05c

1961 11 17

A Spanish style ranch house named 'Manacor' has become a focal point in Fen Ditton since it was built six years ago. 61 11 17c

1962 10 16

"Charity Unlimited" the business founded by the curate of Fen Ditton and the landlord of the King's Head, may go out of existence. They joined forces to collect salvage to raise money for people in need. The response has been magnificent but the church hall, where the articles are stored, is wanted for other functions. Now new premises are needed together with a volunteer van driver to collect the scrap and jumble offered by villagers. 62 10 16b

1962 10 17

Fen Ditton church has a team of the youngest bell-ringers in the county. Most are still at school and all are members of the Parish Youth Club. Interest began two years ago when an experienced student at CCAT offered to train teenage enthusiasts. They cleaned out the belfry, lowering rubbish in buckets through traps in the ceiling and floor of the clock-room to the church floor. Then the window openings were treated to new wire netting, worn ropes were replaced and minor repairs undertaken before instruction began. Now they ring a few rounds each Sunday morning 62 10 17

1962 11 16

The population of Fen Ditton has soared in the last 50 years. In 1952 its boundaries were extended to include the Whitehill and Peverell estates and took in the Leper Chapel. Students from Westcott House had taken services there since 1922 but it could not seat more than 50. So the Priory School was used for Family Eucharist. Now a hall which will become part the new Church of the Holy Cross has opened and the Leper Chapel will be only used for monthly celebrations of the Holy Communion. Many will be saddened by the move away from the unique Normal chapel which they have come to love 62 11 16c

1962 12 07

John Shrive had osier beds at Horningsea and Fen Ditton until he died 40 years ago, employing five men to grow and cut them with bundles kept moist in the Green End ditch until needed. Most of the women of Fen Ditton were employed in peeling or cleaving on a casual basis, sitting on each side of the road with their bundles beside them. Stripped osiers were collected by horse and cart then taken to Mr Shrive's workshop in East Road where they were woven into baskets to be sold from his shop on Peas Hill. School reports up to 1912 list frequent absenteeism with children 'helping with rod peeling' 62 12 07a

1964 10 08

Cambridge Ring Road – the eastern bypass which was proposed before the war – is today bordered by rows of neat council houses and old peoples' flats. It runs from Fen Ditton to the main road under the name Wadloes Road then crosses Newmarket Road and continues as Barnwell Road. Then it peters out into a track behind Cambridge Airport until finally reaching Coldham's Lane. Now a new Inner Relief Road is proposed from Huntingdon Road to Jesus Green. But will either of them ever be completed? 64 10 08

1965 04 15

Fen Ditton photo feature – 65 04 15b, c

1968 04 11

Fen Ditton favourite for development as new suburb – 68 04 11

1971 08 05

Cambridge to Fen Ditton road closed for removal railway bridge on old Mildenhall line – 71 08 05

1972 07 18

Two large new city council housing estates - each with probably hundreds of homes - are being planned for Trumpington and at Fen Ditton, just outside the Cambridge boundary. The Trumpington site was the home of the Royal Show some years ago and is expected to start a storm of controversy because it involves land regarded by the preservationists as being of high scenic value. The Fen Ditton scheme, too, is unlikely to meet with much approval from the village authorities, because it would greatly increase the community's size

1972 11 02

Fen Ditton will die is Cambridge City Council go ahead with their plans for a 1,000-home estate in the village, says the parish Rector, the Rev Raymond Harrison. Writing in the parish magazine he says that with an estate of almost 1,000 homes in the village the population would increase by nearly 4,000 people. "This plan is not for some distant future, but in three or four years time when the city fathers allege they will have no more building land in the city area. Clearly the whole character of Ditton will be altered if this pernicious plan is put into operation". The city council are continuing their efforts to get planning permission to develop an 80-acre site in the village, and another at Trumpington

1973 07 30 c

A whole lotta shakin' was going on at the King's Head, Fen Ditton, last night. The event was the Cambridge Area Jiving Championships and last night's champions were a couple from the Newmarket Rock'n'Roll club - Vivienne Young and Tommy Gallagher. Runners up were the Cambridge Club team of Frances Booker, of Sutton, and Vic Kaval of St Ives. Jim Brady of Bedford was voted the best dressed "Ted". The event was staged by the Cambridge Rock'n'Roll club which started a year ago and has 400 members. The chairman, Frank Humm, said, "I think there is definitely a big revival on the go - but interest in rock'n'roll music has never really died"

1974 09 10

Anglian Water Authority have asked South Cambs district council to refuse permission for any new development and severely restrict building in a further 19 because of the overloading of the sewage treatment works., Milton, whose drains lead into the Cambridge works has suffered from a d development embargo for the last four years. It is now joined by Shelford, Girton, Histon and Fen Ditton where a complete ban on development is requested. At Over, Gamlingay and Bassingbourn permission will only be given to one-building application. All of these sewage works have been badly overloaded for some time but the cuts in public spending have prevented AWA from going ahead with extension schemes

1975 03 25

Cambridge pubs range from grimy to gracious according to a drinker's guide just published by a group of undergraduates. Grime, according to the guide, is synonymous with the Locomotive pub in Mill Road, and grace is one of the virtues of the Plough Inn at Fen Ditton. Praise is lavished on the "thematic scheme" of the Galleon bar in the Burleigh Arms, Newmarket Road. The Free Press has

“exceptional character” and the Baker’s Arms, East Road, is called a “refreshing surprise”. The Bun Shop, Downing Street is said to be “something of a Cambridge institution and well worth a visit”

1975 08 18

Fears are growing that the interchange between the Northern By-pass and Horningsea Road at Fen Ditton will bring serious traffic problems to the area. The Environment Secretary accepts that traffic would increase by 50% but considered the benefits to other roads in Cambridge far outweighed the disadvantages which the village might suffer.

1976 04 13

The Rev John Carre – latest victim in a spate of lead thefts from churches around Cambridge – has put fertiliser bags on the roof of St Andrew’s. Chesterton, to keep out the weather. Thieves who stripped five sheets from the roof a few weeks ago, came back a second time and removed lead from the organ chamber. The parochial church council is to discuss possibilities such as slippery paint, and a dye which cannot be removed from the hands, in order to discourage further thefts. Christ church, Cambridge and churches at Fen Ditton, Quy and Haslingfield are amongst those which have recently been hit by the lead thieves.

1976 07 27

It is not very often that one hears of a big building project being completed on schedule but Cambridge builders John Brignell and Co are two months ahead on two major council housing developments at Tanners Lane and Berrycroft Soham. At a time when the building trade in general is going through a sticky patch, Brignells are full of optimism. They have just been awarded two substantial contracts at Fen Ditton, for 218 dwellings, and the King’s Hedges estate, Cambridge, for 167 houses, maisonettes and bungalows.

1977 07 19

Some of the plans for the development of Cambridge, which upset people living in the necklace villages, are being scrapped. Cambridgeshire planners are rethinking the city development plans because they claim information on population figures and job opportunities was wrong. Population growth in the area over the next 20 years is likely to be only 13,000 instead of the original estimate of 17,000. Intense opposition mounted by villagers against the rapid build-up of houses and industry near their home has had its effect. The Fen Ditton, Waterbeach and Cottenham expansion is almost certain to be scrapped and in its place more housing in the city itself and in growing villages like Hardwick will be suggested.

1978 05 15

To raise £5,000 in five months from 500 people was the Rector of Fen Ditton’s ambitious aim – and now he has done it. The project will not only provide a central meeting place for the parish but has also kindled a community spirit. Every night and weekend under the floodlights and in all sorts of weather people have been working voluntarily on the hall, said the Rev Lawrence Marsh. Two seven-year-olds raised £26 with a disco for the under 12-year-olds and a sponsored knit-in raised more than £900

1978 05 20

A fairy tale has come true for eighty children at Fen Ditton primary school. Their ancient record player is to be replaced with a brand new music centre despite none of their entries being successful in the recent News contest. It wasn’t for lack of trying. Every single child in the school, plus the teachers, had a go at winning something they have wanted for years. Pye Telecommunications, sponsors of the competitions were so touched by their enthusiasm they decided to contribute half the cost of a new centre and the News has chipped in the other half. “Everyone is thrilled and delighted about it”, said the headmaster, Mr A.M. Jones.

1979 12 07 c

Fen Ditton residents are bringing pressure to close the Horningsea junction on the Cambridge Northern By-pass, opened less than a year ago. They claim their village is being destroyed by the great influx of traffic, much of it heavy lorries, using the narrow winding road as a short-cut to the by-pass. Residents of the Dudley and Howard Road areas also complained that vast numbers of cars flood through their estates. But councillors say that the point of the junction is to allow traffic to use the main road instead of going through the city streets.

1980 07 11

An 11-year-old Fen Ditton girl, Lisa Colclough, has won a British women's title in roller-skating – the sport's youngest-ever national champion. She was also runner-up in figure skating. Roller-skating is run along parallel lines to ice skating – much to seriously for Lisa to take her skates out on the Fen Ditton primary school playground with her friends. They cost £200 a pair and the wheels would soon crack. 80 07 11e

1983 06 13

A boat owner saw two years of hard work slipping slowly beneath the waters of the Cam after his 20 foot cabin cruiser was holed by a rowing eight taking part in the last day of the Bumps. The Pembroke College boat had been bumped and this had sent it careering across the river near his home in Green End, Fen Ditton. Its narrow finely pointed hull ripped straight through the side of his boat like an Exocet missile. 83 06 13

1984 08 11

A hotch-potch of buildings, some falling down, all built of a mixture of brick, flint, weatherboard and stone at Home Farm, High Ditch Road, Fen Ditton are taking on a new lease of life. Out of them are being created a complex of five dwellings, each costing more than £75,000. Tithe Developments have tried hard to preserve the feel of the farm buildings which are only a few feet away from the calving unit, housing a dozen of the farm's most likeable animals 84 08 11

1986 06 19

The Ancient Shepherds pub in Fen Ditton, which dates back to the 1540s, has been refurbished with easy chairs, settees and a new carpet to emphasise its restaurant facilities. It offers a set four-course evening menu at £14.50 a head 86 06 19a

1986 11 12

Armed robbers brandishing a sawn-off shotgun burst into Fen Ditton post office just before closing time and terrified the postmaster into handing over £2,000 in cash. They fled in a white Ford Cortina they'd stolen hours earlier. The car was found abandoned down a farm track at Horningsea and the men are thought to have crossed Baitsbite Lock into Fen Road, Milton, where they had a getaway car waiting. Detectives say the raid is identical to one at Haslingfield in February. The Post Office has designated Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire as a 'high-risk' area because of the huge number of robberies 86 11 12

1986 11 22

Although the Fen Ditton National School was considered important enough for children to be ferried across the river from Chesterton, it was never a particularly attractive place. Now the run-down building, previously used as a warehouse, has been converted to include a family home. It has an open staircase and a landing featuring an iron balustrade from a chapel in the Fens. It has been decorated cheaply and simply, using the increasingly-popular 'rag-rolling' technique. 86 11 22a

1988 09 09

A 'park-and-float' scheme is being considered to beat traffic chaos in Cambridge. Commuters would park beside the river at Fen Ditton, Horningsea, Waterbeach or Clayhithe and take a

river bus into the city, having breakfast en route and reading the morning newspapers. Meanwhile the Cam Conservators may appoint its own trouble-shooter patrolling from Byron's Pool to Bottisham Lock in a specially-adapted electric craft. He would crack down on unregistered punts and also clear rubbish and broken branches in a new drive against pollution. 88 09 09a